

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMAKO 00034 051522Z

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R 051144Z JAN 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2978

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USEC BRUSSELS 201

USMISSION OECD PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 34

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ML, EGEN

SUBJ: PRESIDENT TRAORE'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

PART 1 THE ECONOMY

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT TRAORE CONFIRMED THE IMPROVED ECONOMIC SITUATION IN MALI AND SPOKE OF FUTURE EXPORTS OF MILLET, SORGHUM AND RICE. HE HINTED AT IMPORT RESTRICTIONS ON "NON-ESSENTIAL" ITEMS.

2. PRESIDENT TRAORE BEGAN HIS NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE BY COMMENTING ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE NOTED THAT ECONOMIC LIFE IN MALI WAS RETURNING TO NORMAL AFTER THE DROUGHT, BUT THAT RISING COSTS FOR IMPORTS AND ENERGY HAD DEEPENED THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT. CITING AGRICULTURE, HE GAVE AS A MINIMUM ESTIMATE FOR THIS
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PAGE 02 BAMAKO 00034 051522Z

YEAR'S (1974-75) HARVEST OF MILLET-SORGHUM

950,000 TONS (METRIC), AND 280,000 TONS OF RICE, AS AGAINST, RESPECTIVELY, 530,000 AND 90,000 TONS IN 1973-74. GIVEN NORMAL CONDITIONS, THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN'S GOAL OF ONE MILLION TONS OF MILLET-SORGHUM AND 300,000 TONS OF RICE SHOULD BE MET, HE SAID. MALI COULD, THEREFORE, BECOME A NET EXPORTER OF CEREALS OF STORAGE PROBLEMS CAN BE RESOLVED.

3. GROUNDNUT PRODUCTION ROSE FROM 130,000 TONS IN 1973-74 TO 200,000 THIS YEAR. COTTON OUTPUT INCREASED FROM 55,000 TONS TO 100,000.

4. CITING THE CHINESE, THE FRENCH AND THE SOVIETS, IN THAT ORDER, TRAORE MENTIONED SPECIFIC AID PROJECTS--SUGAR, CEMENT--THAT WOULD CUT IMPORTS AND AID THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. THE BASIC BALANCE, HOWEVER, WOULD WORSEN IN 1976 DUE TO WORLD-WIDE INFLATION AND HIGHER TRANSPORT AND ENERGY COSTS.

5. EXPLAINING THAT EXTERNAL AID WAS INDISPENSABLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRAORE SAID IT WAS, HOWEVER, UNREASONABLE FOR ANY INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN COUNTRY TO TAKE FOREIGN AID TO COVER ITS CONSUMPTION NEEDS IN NORMAL TIMES. IT WAS NECESSARY, THEREFORE, TO CONCENTRATE ON IMPORT SUBSTITUTION OF CONSUMABLES AND TO RAISE THE COST OF NON-ESSENTIAL (BUT UNSPECIFIED) IMPORTS.

6. LARGE PORTION OF REMAINDER OF ECONOMIC PORTION OF PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DEVOTED TO PLEADING FOR BETTER MANAGEMENT OF STATE ENTERPRISES. THIS LAST IS PROBABLY A SOP TO THE FRENCH WHO HAVE LONG SOUGHT A RATIONALIZATION OF MALI'S ENORMOUSLY UNPROFITABLE STATE ENTERPRISES WHICH, IN THE LONG RUN, MUST BE SUPPORTED BY THE FRENCH THROUGH THEIR SUPPORT OF THE FRANC MALIEN.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH TRAORE LAUDED ROLE OF RURAL PEASANT, HIS SPEECH WAS DIRECTED MORE TO URBAN PROBLEMS; THE ROLE OF LABOR UNIONS (COVERED IN SEPTTEL, A PROPOSED NATIONAL WAGE INCREASE, PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEMS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BAMAKO 00034 051522Z

TERTIARY SECTOR, AND CORRUPTION BY CIVIL SERVANTS AND OFFICIALS OF STATE ENTERPRISES. IN TERMS OF IDEOLOGY, TRAORE SAID THAT INTERVENTION BY THE STATE IN THE ECONOMIC AREA WAS NO PANACEA. AND, IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH, TRAORE SAID THAT STERILE DOGMATISM WAS UNACCEPTABLE, AND THAT PRAGMATISM WOULD BE THE GUIDE TO SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE.
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